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ABSTRACT

Population studies show that teachers of the 21st century will be educating an urban clientele from a great variety of cultural, ethnic, socioeconomic, and family structures, and probably, more students who are living in poverty. In view of these projections, a Division of Teacher Education has been implemented at the University of Missouri (Kansas City) with emphasis upon the contextuality of urban cultural diversity and children-at-risk, global interrelatedness and interdependence, and around the theme of reflective inquiry as a viable process for solving classroom and educational problems. The requirements are a 150-hour (minimum) interdisciplinary program leading to 2 degrees--the Bachelor of Arts in Teaching and the Bachelor of Liberal Arts. Curricular planning is not based upon a technical approach but derives from reflection upon the educational context. Considerable emphasis is placed on enhanced subject matter and subject area competency, increased and diverse field experiences, articulation between subject areas and education courses and the urban contextual themes of cultural and ethnic diversity, global perspectives, and students-at-risk. The unifying methodology is that of reflective inquiry, an acknowledgement of the program's intent to help teachers become independent, thoughtful decision makers who may become leaders and change agents for better schooling. (AMH)

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REDEFINING A KNOWLEDGE BASE:
A PROPOSAL FOR REFORM IN AN URBAN SETTING

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REDEFINING A KNOWLEDGE BASE:

A PROPOSAL FOR REFORM IN AN URBAN SETTING

Introduction

In a rapidly changing, culturally plural, diversely stratified and globally interdependent society, the intensification and accumulation of knowledge and, therefore, educational reality and existence have an accelerated dynamism never before possessed. The problems and issues generated by such complexities have resulted in a plethora of disparate theories based on a variety of viewpoints concerning what should constitute conceptualizations, knowledge bases--that is, the total repertoire of information and skills--and models (schemas) for training teachers (Beyer and Apple, 1988). A conceptual thrust which has received much emphasis recently is what may be described as a "reflective" approach to teacher education, usually expressed by the phrases, "critical reflection," (Smyth, 1989; Armaline and Hoover, 1989) "reflective thinking," (Martin, 1989) or "reflective inquiry" (Ross and Hannay, 1986).

As Landon Beyer and Michael Apple have recently contended concerning the sensitivity of curricula for reform, "This not only involves the justifiable concern for reflective action,...we need to think about education relationally ....as being integrally connected to the cultural, political, and economic institutions of the larger society" (1988, p. 4). Educational decisions must be made within the context in which these

decisions are operative. Elliot Eisner also notes, "Different contexts may justify emphasis on different orientations" (1985, p. 85). Universities which train teachers, then, must perform their own best reflective dialogues with their respective situations. This is to say that knowledge relevant to the education of teachers can be critically derived experientially and be, therefore, a reality-grounded conceptualization. (John Dewey, of course, made this same observation decades earlier; 1909; 1933.)

Burstein and Cabello (1989) have recently described the student population in the United States as "...more racially and ethnically diverse than in any previous generation in American history" (p. 9). Racial and ethnic diversity has increased more rapidly in urban areas, and therefore a major priority of a teacher education program in an urban university should be to prepare teachers to work with students from the diverse cultural backgrounds of the context in which it is situated. The characteristics of the future populations of urban students will also determine knowledge, abilities or skills, and the reflective flexibility future teachers will need. The present composition of the Kansas City Metropolitan area has been described as 85 percent white, 12 percent black (compared to roughly 17 percent for other metros), and 2.1 percent Hispanic, Asian, and Native American, collectively. The minority populations among youth, however, are greater than the minority populations among the

elderly, which would indicate that in future years the entire Kansas City Metropolitan area will become more ethnically diverse (1988). This is not inclusive of unforseen events such as intra-national or intra-state migrations , or sudden influxes of immigrants precipitated by international crises. There are also approximately 600,000 immigrants per year arriving in America. On the average, 100,000 of them are Western European and the remainder are predominantly Hispanic and Asian (1989, p. 34). At present, approximately 33 percent of the United States population is non-white, and if population trends follow their present course, during the latter half of the twenty-first century 51 percent will be non-white, 23 percent will be Hispanic; Black Americans will represent approximately 19 percent, American Indians 3 percent, and Asian Americans and others about 7 percent. Thus teachers, then, of the twenty-first century will be attempting to educate an urban clientele from an even greater variety of cultural, ethnic, socio-economic, and family structures.

However, in addition to increased ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, and family diversity, future classrooms will include more students who are living in poverty. These children are disadvantaged and, therefore, "at-risk" or likely to leave school before graduation. Children-at-risk categories include students from dysfunctional families, students who engage in substance abuse, those who are products of extreme poverty or physical or emotional abuse, those with an inability to speak English, and

types of special children with physical and emotional handicaps.

With respect to these considerations, a Division of Teacher Education has been implemented at the University of Missouri at Kansas City with emphasis upon the "contextuality" of urban cultural diversity/children-at-risk, and global interrelatedness and increasing interdependence; and the "universality" of the additional theme or unifying perspective of "reflective inquiry." The new Division offers a more comprehensive and trans-cultural conceptual framework and knowledge base by consisting of representatives from the School of Education, the Conservatory of Music, and the College of Arts and Sciences with joint appointments. Subject matter is not replaced but is expanded and enhanced with increased subject area emphasis, more diverse field experiences in the foundations and methods courses and the ethos of reflectivity for confronting not only present and future urban issues and types of children-at-risk but global/multicultural concerns as well. This has resulted in a 150-hour (minimum) interdisciplinary program, at the end of which both the Bachelor of Arts in Teaching and the Bachelor of Liberal Arts degrees are jointly offered.

Rationale

With respect to conceptualization and knowledge base, a teacher education program must take into account the clientele or the area it is serving, i.e., its contextuality; but there must

also be a unifying universality of purpose and method. Contextuality dictates that, "...it is no longer reasonable to regard successful completion of an aggregate of courses as sufficient evidence of teacher understanding. Teaching is seen as ambiguous and complex work requiring judgement, action, and the capacity to reflect and revise decisions on the basis of one's insights" (Barnes, 1989, p. 13). Ross and Hannay argue that the university curriculum must not only transmit traditional knowledge on teacher education but also become a laboratory where such practices are modeled experienced, and reflected upon (1986).

It is felt by the members of the new Division of Teacher Education of the University of Missouri at Kansas City that the best way to deal with urban problems and develop strategies is not solely to acquire information but to strengthen the cognitive processes and commitment for dealing with these. The universality of critically reflective practices within contextuality emphasizes critical reflection on one's own concrete situation by problem-posing and dialogue; both the teacher and student become critical coinvestigators of the manner in which they exist in a dynamic rather than static reality which is in process and transformable (Freire, 1970; Posner, 1988; Beyer and Apple 1988). Thus, curricular planning is not based upon a technical approach but derives from reflection upon the context. As Smyth has recently noted, "When teaching is removed

from an analysis of contextual determinants like those within which it is located, it takes on the aura of a technical process" (1989, p. 2). Therefore, reflective inquiry is embedded in the very nature or contextuality of an educational institution, for in analyzing problems and developing solutions, reflection, being in the cultural, social, economic, and political milieu, is not passive deliberation but active mental processing. The preceding perspective rests upon certain assumptions:

Assumption 1. Educational reality is dynamic and contextual and consists of diverse ethical, socio-cultural, economic and political situations;

Assumption 2. Dynamic and diverse educational contexts require situational awareness, analysis, response, and creative synthesizing and resynthesizing of knowledge;

Assumption 3. The process of learning and thus "becoming" is dynamic and open-ended and occurs by problem-solving or reflective inquiry;

Assumption 4. We "become" as we experience, reflect upon this experience, and act upon it;

Assumption 5. The process of reflective inquiry is a viable process for solving classroom and educational problems and

can lead to better practice;

Assumption 6. The process or mental state of reflectively inquiring can be inculcated.

Conceptualization

In order to propose reform sensitive to present and future culturally diverse urban problems and needs and future projections of these, and thus redefine a knowledge base for teacher education, it was first necessary to develop a unifying conceptual theme or thrust which provided experiential and transactional adaptability to the various cultural, political, and economic determinants in which preservice and inservice teachers might find themselves. Recent recommendations for reform of teacher education by both the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Commission Task Force, discussions in current educational literature for developing teachers who are reflective professionals, and the adoption and emphasis of components or programs by a few schools of education on "critical" or "reflective" thinking/inquiring/teaching also led to the choice of the theme of reflective inquiry for reconstructing the teacher education program and redefining a knowledge base to address primarily urban, at-risk, and culturally plural concerns.

In addition, using the rubrics of "reflective inquiry," "reflective learning," "reflective teaching," "critical

reflection," and "critical inquiry," journal articles, monographs, and sample texts were collected from various sources, and an ERIC search was completed using the same indicators, as well as the additional phrases, "teacher education programs/curricula," and "preservice/inservice teacher education." Many convincing arguments have been presented in recent years that teacher education preparation programs and practices should be redesigned to encourage and engender the perspectives of critical or reflective inquiry (Beyer, 1984; Cruickshank, 1987; Goodman, 1984; Gore, 1987; Krogh, 1987; Mackinnon, 1987; Ross and Kyle, 1987; Wildman and Niles, 1987; Zeichner and Liston, 1987).

Advocates of reflective inquiry go at least as far back as Michel de Montaigne, a French Renaissance philosopher-educator-essayist who, aware of the variety in existence and the changing and diverse nature of reality, opposed the rote memorization and pedantic practices of his time and called for the cultivation of sens or jugement (1579)--a cultivable inner faculty or ability which can guide one in action and enhance the mental manner which enables one to deal with existence (Erman-Eppenauer, 1978). In recent decades, John Dewey (1909; 1933) proposed a theory of reflective thinking, from which much theorizing and research methodology in this area have grown (Ross and Hannay, 1986). As Goodman points out (1989), the assumption behind these views is that it is actually possible to teach preservice teachers to

become more reflective and that reflective teachers or practitioners will, in turn, provide better educational experiences for their students. But what is "reflectivity" or "being reflective"?

Connotatively, excluding the grand and scopic conceptions of John Dewey, recent definitions of reflection have evolved into at least three different perspectives: 1. Donald Cruickshank's model (Ohio State University) which emphasizes the analyzation and application of teaching practice (1987); 2. Donald Schon's model, which posits a more dynamic view of thinking or composing, and responding contextually and situationally while acting (1987), and; 3. Ken Zeichner's model which argues for not only technical analyzation, as well as dynamic situational response but introduces the moral and ethical dimensions of social awareness and creative countering, constructing, and reconstructing of educational reality, and also encourages teachers to develop these in their students (Zeichner, 1981; Zeichner and Liston, 1987). There is an even broader range of definitions, including the addition of such value-laden phrases as "empowerment" (Greene, 1978) and "collaboration" (Beyer and Apple, 1988).

Denotatively, reflectivity may be defined as "...a state of mind; deliberative; thoughtful; self-conscious; concerned with ideas..." and inquiry as "...seeking; search for truth,

information, or knowledge; examination into facts or principles; research; investigation; a seeking for information; interrogation; questioning...(Webster's New International, 1981, pp. 2093;1283). For purposes of this presentation the broader connotative definitions of reflective inquiry will not be examined but it will be here viewed in the more denotative and definitive or meaning-specific sense as a "...deliberative, thoughtful, and inquiring process or state of mind, which becomes both self-conscious and concerned with ideas, and seeks, researches or coinvestigates 'truth,' information, or knowledge from contextual or situational determinants." This, in itself, implies that "reflective inquiry" is not static but is a dynamic cognitive and experiential process which is cultivable and more indicative of the changing and dialectical circumstances of educational reality and the classroom. By implication the diverse ethical, socio-cultural, economic and political influences will become the subjects of analysis and response, and creative synthesis and thereby incorporate the preceding three connotative definitions.

Redefinition and Reorganization

Briefly, to introduce the new program, a renewed commitment and dedication to excellence in teacher education and to educating teachers for meeting the complex urban socio-cultural, environmental, economic, and technological variance of the impending decades, and the examination of assumptions and beliefs

about knowledge, initiated the redefinition and reorganization of the Teacher Education program at the University of Missouri at Kansas City. In the summer of 1988, a campus-wide committee to examine and reform the teacher education program was formed by the Chair of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. William Smith, consisting of faculty from the School of Education, Conservatory of Music, and the College of Arts and Sciences who were involved with and committed to the preparation of teachers, to discuss reforms within the context of various projections of urban and global complexities and needs. Dr. Smith, then Chair of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, pressed for and initiated the action by forming an Ad Hoc Committee on Teacher Education to examine, redefine, and reorganize all aspects of teacher preparation and to reconstruct a knowledge base, not merely responsive to, but creative for the primarily urban context in which the University of Missouri-Kansas City functions, and to prepare outstanding teacher educators as well as teachers.

In addition to conceptualizing both the teacher educator and preservice teacher as reflective inquirers/practitioners, who are able to contextually analyze, apply, and creatively make judgments, it was Dr. Smith's view and the subsequent consensus of committee members that a teacher should be: 1. An educated person; 2. A technically skilled practitioner and; 3. An individual skilled in the profession of teaching. This was also

indicated schematically by a diagram representing these three overlapping areas. Therefore, more emphasis is placed on enhanced subject matter and subject area competency, increased and diverse field experiences which are graduated in intensity, and greater articulation and relationships among subject areas and education courses with the urban contextual themes of cultural and ethnic diversity, global perspectives, students-at-risk; and with the universal conceptualization of reflective inquiry.

The Teacher Education Program: Rationale and Substance

The new Teacher Education Program represents the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Teacher Education directed toward redefining the Teacher Education Program at the University of Missouri - Kansas City. Specifically, the Ad Hoc Committee on Teacher Education was composed of members of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, faculty from the various divisions of the School of Education involved in the preparation of pre-service teachers, faculty from the College of Arts and Sciences, and faculty from the Conservatory of Music. The Ad Hoc Committee on Teacher Education was formally accepted by the School of Education as an entirely new division--the Division of Teacher Education.

Discussion among the members of what is now the Division of Teacher Education resulted in several decisions. Among the more important decisions have been the following:

1. A teacher should be an educated person, a specialist in the profession of teaching, and a technically skilled practitioner.

2. The program requirements should reflect NCATE standards and the Guidelines of Specialty Organizations.

3. The Program should comply with the requirements for certification as set forth by the State of Missouri and the Missouri State Department's "Procedures and Standards for Approval of Professional Education Programs in Missouri."

4. Persons completing the program should be awarded both a Bachelor of Arts in Education Degree, and, depending on their teaching area, a Bachelor's Degree in the College of Arts and Sciences, a Bachelor's Degree in the Conservatory of Music, or a Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education.

5. The professional education portion of the program must be sufficiently articulated that redundancies and overlaps are eliminated.

The consequences of these decisions for the program are now seen in the number of hours required in general education and subject specific areas, the nature and organization of the components of the programs, and the conceptualization of Teacher

Education at UMKC, which have culminated in a double-degree, 150-hour, Professional Semester sequenced program. The requirements in each of the subject specific areas associated with an NCATE Speciality Organization reflect the recommendations of that Speciality Organization, as well. The general education program, in particular, was affected by the preceding decisions. A few of the general education courses are specified by the State certification requirements. The other general education courses are either those required by the College of Arts and Sciences for students majoring in a subject area in Arts and Sciences (Secondary Education Students) or are the requirements for the Degree of Liberal Arts in the College of Arts and Sciences.

The NCATE Specialty Organizations' recommendations for the programs leading to Elementary Certification were followed also. Increases in mathematics and science hours resulted from the societies' recommendations and also from the faculty's experience in the field with Teacher Education Program graduates and the graduates of other programs.

The members of the Division of Teacher Education have fashioned an articulated program of integrated field and classroom experiences designed to prepare teachers for the classrooms of the next decades in urban and suburban settings. It is believed that a balance must be achieved among the components of technical skill, subject backgrounds, and

professional dedication; it is also believed that the proposed program achieves that balance. For example, prior to entrance into the four "Professional Semester Sequences" (PS 1-4) which now comprise the final professional stages of the Elementary Program, a student will be required to complete at least 86 hours of general education and subject matter background. Prior to the Secondary Professional Semester Sequence (PS 1-4), the student will be required to complete an average of 84 hours in general education and in his/her major field.

The Elementary and Secondary Professional Sequences include both general and special methods courses coordinated with progressive field-based and practicum experiences each semester; they are designed to help students develop competence in observation, analysis, interpretation, and application within the context of reflective decision-making and the consideration of alternative possibilities. On-campus seminars and practicums are also devised to help students further develop critical habits and attitudes of professional decision-making, and to promote analysis and reflection in a stimulating and supportive group setting.

Conclusion

The Faculty of the School of Education of the University of Missouri at Kansas City believe that the education of a teacher is never completed. The academic preparation at the University

establishes the firm foundation upon which appropriate classroom experience will build confidence, skill, and insight toward developing an accomplished and proficient teacher. The new program in Teacher Education will reflect the commitment of the University as an urban university. As part of a university in a large metropolitan area with a racially and socio-economically diverse population, the program will aim to attract students who represent that diversity and to prepare teachers to work with young people from a variety of ethnic and socio-cultural backgrounds. To address this mission the Teacher Education Program, therefore, has encompassed several themes. Emphasis is placed upon the "contextuality" of urban cultural diversity/children-at-risk, and global interrelatedness and increasing interdependence; and the "universality" of the unifying perspective of reflective inquiry. The focus upon multicultural/global education will seek to heighten students' awareness and appreciation of the pluralistic nature of our society, of the interdependence of world cultures, and of the implications of this diversity for school pedagogy and curricula. The focus upon reflective inquiry is an acknowledgment of the intention to help teachers become independent, thoughtful decision-makers, capable of analyzing as well as implementing curricula and pedagogy, with an awareness of alternatives and consequences.

The Teacher Education Program intends to prepare students

for a future in which restructured schools would provide an environment more supportive of teaching/learning interactions. The graduates of this program, therefore, would be prepared not only to continue learning and to adapt to positive change, but to become potential leaders and change agents for better schooling.

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